

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 L-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3276
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMCONSUL CHIENG MAI
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
INS WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 11299

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJ: RTG REFUGEE POLICY

REF: A) BANGKOK 10537 (B) BANGKOK 11298

1. PIERRE JAMBOR, THE ACTING UNHCR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE, INFORMED US APRIL 19 OF INFORMATION HE HAD JUST RECEIVED ABOUT FORCED REPATRIATION TO LAOS FROM CHIANG RAI PROVINCE. JACQUES MOUCHET, THE NORTH THAILAND UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE, INFORMED JAMBOR OF AN APRIL 18 CONVERSATION HE HAD HAD WITH THE CHIANG KHONG DISTRICT OFFICER (DO). THE DO TOLD MOUCHET THAT HE HAD REPATRIATED 46 YAO AFTER HAVING CONTACTED HIS COUNTERPARTS ON THE LAO SIDE OF THE BORDER, AND HAVING OBTAINED ASSURANCES FROM THEM THAT THE YAO WOULD NOT BE KILLED. THE DO SIAD HIS POLICY WAS THAT IF HE THOUGHT THERE WAS NO DANGER IN REPATRIATING REFUGEES, HE WOULD SEND THEM BACK TO LAOS; IF HE THOUGHT THERE WAS DANGER, HE WOULD SEND THEM TO THE UNHCR-SUPPORTED CAMPS.
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2. MOUCHET ALSO MENTIONED THAT 34 HMONG AT DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS HAD ALL VANISHED INTO THE THAI COUNTRYSIDE. THE DO HAD SENT 14 LAO AND 10 LEU TO THE UNHCR-SUPPORTED CAMP. HE INTENDED TO DO THE SAME WITH 6 HAW WHO HAD RECENTLY ARRIVED.

3. JAMBOR SAID THAT MOUCHET WOULD FILE A COMPLETE REPORT AFTER HE HAD TALKED WITH REFUGEES IN THE CHIENG KHONG CAMP, AND HAD OBTAINED A FULLER PICTURE ON YAO REPATRIATIONS. WHEN HE RECEIVES MOUCHET'S REPORT, JAMBOR INTENDS TO QUERY GENEVA ABOUT WHAT STEPS TO TAKE. JAMBOR SEEMS TO BE BACKING AWAY FROM HIS EARLIER COMMENTS TO US THAT, IF THE STORY PROVED TRUE, HE WOULD LAUNCH A PROTEST WITH THE THAI MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

4. COMMENT: NUMERICAL DETAILS VARY SLIGHTLY FROM THOSE REPORTED IN REF B. SOME OF THE DISCREPANCIES MAY BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE TIME LAG BETWEEN THE VISITS OF A U.S. CONSULAR OFFICER FROM CHIENG MAI APRIL 12, AND THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE APRIL 18.

5. WE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE APRIL 19 NEWSPAPER COVERAGE IN THAILAND OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN'S APRIL 12 TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP, AND INTERNATIONAL LAW TO EXPRESS TO A KEY MINISTRY OF INTERIOR REFUGEE OFFICIAL OUR DISMAY AT FORCED REPATRIATION IN CHIANGRAI. WE STRESSED THE IMMINENT PROBABILITY OF A NEW U.S. PROGRAM THAT WOULD TAKE SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF REFUGEES FROM THAI INLAND CAMPS.

WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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